

# 5 Principles of Governance for the Church Today

Scripture assigns roles within the church, stressing that structure enables ministry. Paul links spiritual life with organized practice, making governance essential to God's mission. Transparent processes ensure safety and accountability, freeing leaders to focus on preaching and discipleship. 1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 14:40, Romans 12:6-8

These five foundational elements are vital for establishing sound governance within the Church.

## 1. Foundational Legal Documents

- **Articles of Incorporation:** Establishes legal identity and are required for recognition under provincial law and charitable registration.
- **Bylaws:** Defines governance structure, membership, board composition, and decision-making processes. Additionally, they safeguard organizational assets and affirm that collective authority remains with the membership. Bylaws should be periodically reviewed to ensure continued alignment with the ministry's objectives and legal obligations.

**Romans 13:1<sup>ESV</sup>** “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

## 2. Board Governance Policies

- **Board Roles & Position Descriptions:** Establish clear definitions of responsibilities for directors, officers, committees, and staff members.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Ensures integrity and transparency.
- **Board Member Code of Conduct:** Sets expectations for ethical and spiritual leadership.
- **Board Covenant or Leadership Agreement:** Establishes a foundation of trust between the board and pastor(s), grounded in principles of stewardship.

**Proverbs 11:14<sup>ESV</sup>** “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.”

### 3. Accountability & Compliance Documents

- **Annual Filings & CRA Compliance:** Required for maintaining legal status.
- **Insurance & Risk Management Policies:** Protect the church legally and financially.
- **Confidentiality Policy:** Safeguards sensitive information.
- **Safeguarding/Vulnerable Persons Policy:** Essential for ministries involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

**2 Corinthians 5:10<sup>ESV</sup>** *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

### 4. Financial Stewardship Documents

- **Annual Budget (Board-Approved):** Aligns resources with mission priorities.
- **Financial Reporting & Audit Records:** Provide transparency and accountability.
- **Donation, Tithing & Reserve Policies:** Ensure ethical stewardship and sustainability.

**2 Corinthians 8:20-21<sup>ESV</sup>** — *“We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered to us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man.”*

### 5. Ministry Effectiveness & Communication

- **Mission & Vision Statements:** Rooted in Scripture, guiding governance decisions.
- **Strategic/Ministry Plan:** Connects governance to practical ministry outcomes.
- **Communication & Transparency Policy:** Ensures decisions and finances are shared openly with congregation and stakeholders.

**Matthew 5:16<sup>ESV</sup>** — *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*